AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY JOINT TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ROOM 802, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009, 10:00 A.M.

THOSE PRESENT:

Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission

George Patty Paul DeCamp Juriah Lewis

Lynn Russell Marya Moultrie

CAC

Don Skinner Mark Ivey Ray Griffin Willie Bell

Walter Lamb Butch Gallop Les Morton

GA DOT

Vonda Everett Cissy McNure

Karen Quarles - (Teleconference)

Radney Simpson

Dave Cox

City of Aiken Sandra Korbelik City of Augusta

Sharon Dottery Steve Cassell

David Griffith - (Teleconference)

Columbia County

Ronnie Hutto Don Barrow Matt Schlachter

City of North Augusta

Skip Grkovic

Aiken County

Stephen Strohminger Gerald Jefferson Jim White

SC DOT

Mike Sullivan Jim Frierson

Lower Savannah COG

Lynnda Bassham

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

1. Consider approval of the minutes of the joint Technical Coordinating Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee meeting held on March 26, 2009.

CAC – Mr. Morton moved to approve the minutes of March 26, 2009. Mr. Lamb seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

- TCC Mr. Cox moved to approve the minutes of March 26, 2009. Mr. Schlachter seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- 2. Consider approval of projects in the Georgia part of the ARTS area funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and amend the FY 2008 2011 Transportation Improvement Program and 2030 Long Range Transportation Program to include these projects. (See attachment)
 - (a) Columbia and Richmond County Road / Intersection Projects \$8,536,373.00

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This is to consider approval of ARRA funded projects in the Georgia part of the TMA, and adding them to the current TIP and LRTP. Attached to the agenda are two pages of the summary of items recommended for funding. The first table is a listing of road resurfacing, traffic signal upgrades and intersection improvement projects in Richmond and Columbia County totally approximately \$8,536,373 which is the amount available for funding these types of projects for the Metropolitan Planning Organization. This list of projects was developed with direct input from Richmond and Columbia County stakeholders who have agreed to this combination of projects and are competent they can be completed in a timely manner and in accordance with the requirements of the stimulus program.

CAC – Mr. Lamb moved to approve these projects and amendments to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Lamb seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC – Mrs. Korbelik moved to approve these projects and amendments to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Schlachter seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

(b) Columbia County Transit (Section 5311) - \$154,500.00

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. These projects are also included with the agenda. There was no one available from Columbia County to explain the projects.

CAC – Mr. Griffin moved to approve this amendment to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Lamb seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Schlachter moved to approve these projects and amendments to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

- 3. Consider a request from North Augusta to amend the FY 2008 2011 Transportation Improvement Program and the Long Range Transportation Plan by adding the following project:
 - (a) Widen US 25 to five full lanes from the end of the I-520 project to just past the Walnut Lane (S-2104), approximately 0.25 mile.

Mr. Grkovic asked why this is separated out from the item #4 with the other TIP amendments. The other projects are already in the current Long Range Plan and this project was not. This project is actually going to be a seven lane facility and will run just past the Walnut Lane intersection.

CAC – Mr. Griffin moved to approve this amendment to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Lamb seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Schlachter moved to approve these projects and amendments to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Consider amending the FY 2008 – 2011 Transportation Improvement Program by:

(a) Adding the Belvedere / Clearwater Road (SC-126) widening project;

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. This is currently a two-lane facility. I-520 interchange will be completed within the next few months. Congestion is anticipated on this facility once the I-520 project is completed.

(b) Adding various resurfacing projects funded by the 2009 ARRA Pavement Improvement Program;

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. A handout was distributed to the Committees. Resurfacing projects have been highlighted. SC DOT has approved these projects for resurfacing using ARRA funds.

(c) Deleting the North Leg Road bridge widening project (P. I. #2505700);

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The North Leg Road bridge has been in the LRTP and TIP for a number of years without a companion road project along with it. It is the MPO's recommendation to drop this project from the TIP. If a project is identified in the future, this project can be brought back into the TIP.

(d) Deleting the North Belair Road widening project and corresponding bridge project (P. I. #245200).

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This project has also been in the LRTP and TIP for a number of years. There was substantial public opposition to the project based on the proposed design (i.e. four travel lanes with a raised median), Columbia County agrees to the deletion <u>of this project along with the corresponding bridge project.</u>

CAC – Mr. Lamb moved to approve these amendments to the TIP. Mr. Griffin seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Cox moved to approve these amendments to the TIP. Mr. Strohminger seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Consider approval of draft ARTS FY 2010 - 2013 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The draft summary was distributed. This continues to be a work in progress. This is brought to you today so we can move forward with the public review and comment period on the draft TIP. Georgia projects are on the first page of the handout, the two tables show the various lump sum activities related to road maintenance, safe routes to school, maintenance for roads on the interstates and National Highway System and for a number of other programs listed. The second table breaks out various funding categories for bridge widening and new construction. The two

items to look at are the Surface Transportation Program funds under L230 and L240. The L230 is the funding that the MPO, CAC, TCC and ultimately the Policy Committee make decisions about how to allocate the funds with all the stakeholders.

Page two is the similar table outlining the overall guideshare amounts and funding categories for the South Carolina side.

Pages three and four outline Richmond and Columbia County projects for the allocation across various funding categories. Some of these projects are being funded with ARRA funds. The Windsor Spring Road Phase IV project proposal is to fund the right-of-way acquisition over three years. Construction is programmed with L240 funds in FY 2013 which is subject to dialog with GA DOT. Richmond County has indicated they would provide the difference between the available L240 funds and the total estimated construction cost.

Mr. DeCamp read through the list of projects for Richmond and Columbia Counties. We are currently waiting on feedback from GA DOT on the allocation of L240 funding for a project or project phases in Columbia County.

Mr. Jefferson presented the Aiken County projects of the draft TIP. Everything has been sent out for public comment except the US 25 Highway, Hitchcock Parkway and the Belvedere / Clearwater Road projects. Intersection improvements are almost complete on the Doughtery Road / Silver Bluff Road intersection. Plans are complete on the East Buena Vista Avenue / Atomic Road Corridor project.

Five projects will be funded with State Infrastructure Bank funds and four projects are being funded with ARRA funds. \$634,000 will be added to the ARRA funds to cover additional resurfacing projects. An additional \$518,000 will be added to the TMA allocation for the Whiskey Road corridor project for the City of Aiken. The Cities of Aiken and North Augusta each received \$1.4 million for projects. Enhancement funds in the amount of \$1,000,000 for ARRA projects should also be added.

Mr. DeCamp said that the MPO is still seeking input from Columbia County with regard to the allocation of \$4.1 million in L240 funding. In addition, the draft TIP has funding allocations that are different from what GA DOT recommended. A letter will be sent to GA DOT requesting the shifting of funds as outlined as a condition to approving the draft TIP.

CAC – Mr. Griffin moved to approve the draft TIP with conditions outlined above. Mr. Gallop seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Grkovic moved to approve the draft TIP with conditions outlined above. Mrs. Korbelik seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Consider recommendation to hire a consultant to update the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan.

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. A Request for Qualifications was sent out in May and nine consultants responded to the request. A selection committee consisting of staff from the MPO, APT, Lower Savannah COG, Columbia County Engineering, North Augusta and Aiken County Planning Departments reviewed the Qualification statements. The respondents were short listed to three consultants using standardized evaluation criteria. These three consultants presented proposals to the

selection committee. The proposals were evaluated by the Selection Committee and Wilbur Smith and Associates was chosen to update the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan. The plan update is mandated by law.

Mr. DeCamp added that ARTS staff have been working hard over the past few months developing and updating the base year socio economic data that goes into the travel demand model. This project was actually started approximately four months ago. Thanks to everyone that has helped get this data processed.

CAC – Mr. Griffin moved to approve the recommendation to hire Wilbur Smith and Associates to perform the update of the ARTS LRTP. Mr. Gallop seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Grkovic moved to approve the recommendation to hire Wilbur Smith and Associates to perform the update of the ARTS LRTP. Mr. Strohminger seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Status of Projects:

(a) Georgia Highways

Mrs. Everett presented this item. There are no major changes since the last update. The ARRA-funded SR 223 @ Euchee Creek bridge widening project (PI # 232306) was let, but the award has been deferred. Projects scheduled to be let in the next three months include:

- Alexander Drive Widening (ARRA Funded)
- Resurfacing SR 28 from Sand Bar Ferry Bridge to East Boundary (ARRA Funded)
- Resurfacing SR 56 Spur from SR 56 to SR 10 (ARRA Funded)
- Proposed steel beam repair at 14 locations statewide
- Resurfacing SR 104 (Reynolds Street) from SR 4 / US 25 BU to NW of 15th Street (ARRA Funded)
- Resurfacing SR 104 (Jones Street) from NW of 15th Street to SR 4 / US 25 BUS (ARRA Funded)

Project updates include:

- William Few Parkway Extension The FONSI and CLOMR are being resolved
- Flowing Wells Road Widening The work on this project has stopped due to funding issues.
- Old Petersburg / Old Evans Road Widening Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed. 134 out of 164 parcels have been acquired. Final Plans are 80% complete.
- Wrightsboro Road Widening Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed
- I-520 from Gordon Highway to US 1 (Deans Bridge Road) Right-of-way plans incomplete.
- Windsor Spring Road Widening (Phases IV and V) Right of way plans have been approved.

(b) South Carolina Highways

Mrs. Korbelik and Mr. Grkovic presented this item.

- **Silver Bluff** (Indian Trail to Richardson Lake Road) The public information meeting is scheduled for September 24. The right turn lane is moving along.
- East Buena Vista Avenue and Atomic Road This project has been surveyed. We are waiting on the survey for Atomic Road to develop the corridor. Changes will be made to this project and Atomic Road. The corridors will be pursued together but each will retain separate Project Identification Numbers.
- Georgia Avenue (Center Street) project is complete and open to traffic. It will be transferred to the City shortly for ownership and maintenance.
- **I-520 The** Palmetto Parkway will be open in late October. Traffic improvements to US 25 including the bridges across I-20 at Exit 5 are scheduled to be completed by December 21, 2009.

(c) Augusta Public Transit

Ms. Dottery presented this item. Mr. Johnson is out on medical leave. Negotiations are ongoing to move the Augusta Public Transit Administration building to Mike Padgett Highway. ARRA- funded projects will include six buses, a van, IVR boxes, and computers. The 2010 APT budget has been submitted to the City. A contingency plan will also be submitted with a 5% and 10% reduction in the budget. Ridership is steady at this time.

(d) Aiken County Transit

Mrs. Bassham presented this item. Due to the economy, the Aiken County Council reduced the Best Friend's Express operating funds by \$50,000. Federal transit funds cannot be used for operating costs, so the most painless way to reduce service is being sought. Public meetings will be held in September. Saturday service will have to be eliminated and other additional cuts will be evaluated. The good news, Richard Eberle will join the LSCOG staff as Transit Projects Manager. He will be working directly on the implementation of the Mobility Services for All Americans grant (MSA). LSCOG is one of three chosen nationwide by the US DOT to develop and implement a one-call center coordinated network for the six county region. Someone looking for a way to use public transit will be able to contact the center and be connected with available transit services throughout the service area. Updated routing, scheduling and dispatch software will enable transit providers to coordinate services. Grant funds also will pay for the installation of automatic vehicle locators and data terminals on all transit vehicles. The MSA initiative will help determine where the vehicles are, what the ridership really is and bring the transit system out there to the people who need it the most. This will be up and running by March 2010.

8. Update on Special Studies Projects:

(a) Regional Freight Study

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The Freight Study is complete. We are in the process of printing a limited number of copies. Most of you will receive a CD copy and it will be on the website shortly. There were two deliverables on the study. One was the Regional Freight Profile which has all the background information, and then the Freight Plan highlights and summarizes the needs and identifies specific projects to improve the movement of freight trains and freight transportation in and out of the region.

(b) APT Transit Development Plan

Mr. Lewis presented this item. Every five years transit has to prepare an overview of the transit system. Wilbur Smith and Associates was hired to prepare the plan this year. Two public meetings were held. There are non-rider surveys out to get the whole community involved. The school board was solicited to help distribute the surveys among their employees. Fort Gordon was also helping with surveys along with several area industries. The consultants presented an Executive Summary to the Augusta Commissioners in August. The executive summary indicated that a permanent funding sources needs to be identified for transit and not to look at transit as a dependent. They took the economic development approach. The study recommends eliminating two routes and adding an express bus route and a cross-town bus route. The Commission requested they study a transit corridor in the Gordon Highway area that was not identified in the study. A limited number of hard copies of the final report will be available. The executive summary and complete study will be posted on the website.

(c) City of Aiken

Mrs. Korbelik presented this item. A consultant selection committee selected Wilbur Smith and Associates to prepare the north side transportation study. Contract negotiations have begun. The project will take six months to complete.

8. Update on Air Quality Initiatives

(a) Aiken County

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Two air quality meetings have been held in the last two months. One was a strategy meeting and the other for prescribed slow burns. North Augusta has proposed a park and ride lot be constructed at Exit 5 on I-20.

(b) Richmond County

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. In response for potential designation of non attainment, EPA will be submitting recommendations in November which will begin the thirty day comment period. In an effort to show EPA that we are attempting to correct our air quality problems, we have engaged in a number of activities. Some of the activities we have been involved in include the update of the CSRA Air Quality Alliance website that shares information on how the public can get involved with clean air initiatives. We teamed up with the Clean Air Campaign and sponsored a Lunch and Learn in June designed to educate local businesses on the clean air initiatives and the commuter rewards program available to their employees. This initiative promotes car pooling, transit and tele-work options, which a number of local businesses have joined. ARTS has joined a prescribed burn work group in which we have partnered with SC DHEC, GA EPD, Aiken County and numerous local business partners to coordinate a prescribed burn program. In October, we will be submitting a list of clean air initiates that have been undertaken to each State's air quality agency. This can be submitted to EPA as additional information and as a part of each State's Implementation Plan.

10. Issues and Concerns

(a) Prior -

There were no prior issues or concerns to address.

(b) Current / New -

Ms. Russell introduced Mark Ivey as the new member of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

George Patty Project Director